

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LAHORE 01392 140923Z

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ACTION NEA-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9758

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

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AMEMBASSY LONDON

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, VJ

SUBJECT: PUNJAB GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION

BEGIN SUMMARY: IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROVISIONS OF NEW CONSTITUTION,
TOP LEVELS PUNJAB GOVERNMENT
HAVE BEEN REORGANIZED. CHANGES
OF PERSONALITIES FOLLOW REALIGNMENT OF POSITIONS OF POWER.
END SUMMARY.

1. FORMER PUNJAB AGRICULTURAL MINISTER NAWAB SIDDIQ HUSSEIN
QURESHI WAS SWORN IN AS GOVERNOR OF PUNJAB AT CEREMONY IN
LAHORE NOVEMBER 12, REPLACING MUSTAPHA KHAR. BOOT UPSTAIRS
FOR QURESHI OPENS WAY FOR NEWCOMER TO PUNJAB CABINET. IT IS
ASSUMED THAT QURESHI HAS RESIGNED (OR WILL DO SO VERY SOON) FROM
HIS NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SEAT.

2. EX-GOVERNOR MALIK GHULAM MUSTAPHA KHAR WAS SWORN IN AS
PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER HALF HOUR AFTER ADMINISTRATION
OF OATH TO GOVERNOR QURESHI. KHAR IS NOT MEMBER OF PUNJAB
ASSEMBLY, AND MUST THEREFORE SEEK ELECTION TO THAT BODY.
HE TOLD PRESS NOVEMBER 10 HE WAS STILL TRYING TO DECIDE
WHICH SEAT IN MUZAFFARAGARH TO CONTEST. HE NOTED THAT TWO
MPA'S FROM DISTRICT (MIAN GHULAM ABBAS AND AHMED SHAH)
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PAGE 02 LAHORE 01392 140923Z

HAD OFFERED TO RESIGN AND LET HIM RUN FOR THEIR SEATS. HE SAID HE WOULD CHOOSE ONE IN NEXT FEW DAYS AND NOTED THAT UNSEATED MPA WOULD, IN TURN, RUN FOR KHAR'S SOON-TO-BE-VACATED NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SEAT. FYI - PUNJAB RUMOR MILL IS WORKING OVERTIME ABOUT FUTURE, BUT FOLLOWING TIDBIT MAY BE OF INTEREST: TWO CREDIBLE SOURCES IN PAST FEW DAYS HAVE RESURRECTED OLD RUMOR HERE THAT KHAR WOULD SOON MOVE ON TO DIPLOMATIC POST. LATEST VERSION CLAIMS THAT HE WILL SERVE AS CHIEF MINISTER MAXIMUM OF 6 MONTHS, AND THEN BE SENT ABROAD AS PAKISTAN AMBASSADOR TO EITHER UK OR US. END FYI.

3. FORMER CHIEF MINISTER MALIK MERAJ KHALID RESIGNED HIS POST ON NOVEMBER 6 TO TAKE UP APPOINTMENT AS LEADER OF PAKISTAN DELEGATION TO UNGA (BIO BEING FORWARDED BY AIRGRAM). WITH KHALID'S RESIGNATION, PUNJAB CABINET WAS DISSOLVED. KHALID DEPARTED FOR NEW YORK NOVEMBER 11 AND IS EXPECTED RETURN AFTER UNGA AND TO BE BROUGHT INTO FEDERAL CABINET. SPECULATION IN LAHORE IS THAT HE WILL BE GIVEN MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING. POWERLESS AS CHIEF MINISTER, KHALID WAS SHUNTED TO UNGA POST TO GET HIM OUT OF PUNJAB, WHERE, EA "PHILOSOPHER" OF PPP WITH REPUTATION FOR BENEVOLENCE, HE HAS SOME FOLLOWING. HE WAS NOT MADE GOVERNOR, EVEN THOUGH IT IS FIGUREHEAD POSITION, BECAUSE IN EYES OF PUNJABIS HE DID NOT HAVE NECESSARY ARISTOCRATIC BEARING; GOVERNOR QURESHI IS TRUE NAWAB, WELL KNOWN SPORTSMAN AND FULLY LOOKS PART.

4. PAKISTAN AMBASSADOR TO UK, MIAN MUMTAZ MOHAMMAD KHAN DAULTANA, RESIGNED HIS NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SEAT DURING FIRST WEEK OF NOVEMBER, ACCORDING TO LAHORE EDITION PAKISTAN TIMES NOVEMBER 6. THE GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED PAPER INDICATED THAT PPP WOULD NOMINATE FORMER MPA RIAZ DAULTANA (COUSIN OF AMBASSADOR) TO RUN FOR VACANT SEAT. THIS RESIGNATION WAS NECESSARY UNDER TERMS OF NEW CONSTITUTION WHICH PROHIBITS MNA'S FROM HOLDING BOTH ASSEMBLY SEATS AND GOP JOBS AFTER NOVEMBER 13 (3 MONTHS AFTER ADOPTION OF CONSTITUTION).

5. DR. GHULAM HUSSAIN, FORMER ADVISOR TO GOVERNOR KHAR AND MNA FROM JHELMUM, HAS RESIGNED FROM ADVISOR'S JOB. THERE IS SPECULATION HERE THAT HE IS PRIME CANDIDATE FOR FEDERAL CABINET.

6. CHAUDHRY TALIB HUSSAIN, FORMER SPECUAL ASSISTANT TO GOVERNOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 LAHORE 01392 140923Z

KHAR AND MP FROM LYALLPUR, HAS RESIGNED FROM KHAR'S STAFF AND IS RUMORED TO BE GOOD CANDIDATE FOR SLOT IN PUNJAB PROVINCIAL CABINET.

7. SHEIKH JAVED-UR-REHMAN, FORMER ADVISOR TO GOVERNOR HAS BEEN NAMED ADVISOR TO CHIEF MINISTER (I.E., HE IS STILL KHAR'S CHIEF ADVISOR). REHMAN'S NAME HAS SURFACED IN SPECULATION

CONCERNING PPP CANDIDATE FOR LAHORE (NO. 1) SEAT RECENTLY MADE VACANT BECAUSE OF DEATH OF INCUMBENT SHEIKH SAFDAR ALI. HOWEVER, REHMAN IS REPORTEDLY STRONGLY OPPOSED BY SHEIKH RASHID'S GROUP IN PUNJAB PPP.

8. ANOTHER OFFICIAL TO SHIFT WITH KHAR IS AMANULLAH KHAN, WHO WAS PRESS SECRETARY TO GOVERNOR AND WHO HAS NOW BECOME PRESS SECRETARY TO CHIEF MINISTER.

9. WHILE IT WAS GENERALLY EXPECTED THAT NEW PUNJAB CABINET WOULD BE ANNOUNCED NOVEMBER 12, OR AT LATEST NOVEMBER 13, ANNOUNCEMENT HAS NOT YET MATERIALIZED AND OUR SOURCES INDICATE PROCESS MIGHT TAKE AS MUCH AS ANOTHER WEEK. FIRST OUTWARD EVIDENCE OF DIFFICULTIES CAME AT DOUBLE SWEARING-IN CEREMONY OF GOVERNOR AND CHIEF MINISTER WHICH, ACCORDING TO BOTH GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED PRESS AND LAHORE POLITICAL RUMOR MILL, WAS TO BE ATTENDED BY PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO. HOWEVER, BHUTTO DEPARTED GOVERNOR'S HOUSE AT SAME HOUR SWEARING-IN CEREMONY WAS TO BEGIN, CAUSING DELAY IN CEREMONY AND FURIOUS SPECULATION AMONG ATTENDEES.

10. COMMENT: CHANGES OUTLINED ABOVE BECAME POLITICALLY NECESSARY UNDER NEW CONSTITUTION WHICH TRANSFERS EXECUTIVE POWER IN PROVINCES FROM GOVERNOR TO CHIEF MINISTER. FAILURE TO FORM NEW CABINET PROBABLY REFLECTS (1) STRUGGLE BETWEEN VARIOUS FACTIONS OF PPP (WHICH PREVIOUSLY CONFINED ITSELF TO PARTY REORGANIZATION EFFORT), AND (2) RUMORED DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN KHAR AND BHUTTO AS TO WHO SHOULD GET MINISTERIAL POSITIONS.

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